

Responding to the Care Charges Consultation

When responding to a consultation, using your own words and experiences helps to make your contribution stand out. We have chosen not to produce a single standard response in order to encourage more individual replies.

But we would like to make it as easy as possible for you to reply to the consultation and have put together some bullet points for you to consider before answering each of the questions. Feel free to base your responses around these points or as a spark to write your own comments based on your personal experiences and views.

You can find much more information on the redesigned Scotlandagainstthecaretax.com website.

Bullets Points for each Consultation Question

1. Do you support the principle that non-residential social care services should be available free at the point of delivery to those who have been assessed by a relevant professional as requiring them (as is the case within health care)?

Yes

- Human rights should not be affected by which organisation, NHS or local authority social care, gives you help or support.
- Having to pay to exercise basic rights like to get out of bed discriminates against disabled people.
- Care charging is an unnecessary barrier for proper Health and Social Care Integration
- Any distinction between “health” and “social” care is false. Poor social care will lead to poor health. Poor health care will make good social care very hard. The distinction is based on outmoded values and approaches.
- Some people worry that more people will ask for social care if it is free but already not everyone who asks for help gets it. Local authorities and health services already have elaborate systems established to ensure that only people who need help get it. These include assessment systems and eligibility criteria which are likely to stop lots more people getting social care, even if it is free.
- Care charging financially disadvantages disabled people and can push them into poverty

2. Do you agree that legislation is a necessary and appropriate means of addressing the issues identified?

Yes

Legislation is needed because

- Local authorities currently have not been able to arrive at a voluntary arrangement to end care charges.
- COSLA and local authorities have been trying to make the charging system fairer for 14 years without success and that ending care charges is not currently even on their agenda.

- The existing power that the Scottish Government has is only for the regulation of care charges which if ever implemented would lead first to changes in the existing system and not to the end of care charges.
- The Scottish Government power to regulate charges has not been used in 14 years. This has created a strong impression that consensus can solve the current problems.
- A new law can give the government the moral authority to take firm action.
- The current system of care charges is so complicated that it is hard to see how it can be reformed without some people losing out while others gain.
- The decision to end care charges for carers was introduced in legislation and this has set a precedent for other action to change care charges.
- A new law would prevent a future government changing their mind and reintroducing care charges.

3. The current system has resulted in varying charges in different areas for the same level and quality of service. What are the advantages and disadvantages of ending this inconsistency?

Advantages

- People will be able to move easily from one part of the country to another to take advantage of informal support or other resources available to them without being affected adversely.
- It will create a level playing field for social care support all over Scotland.
- It will save extensively on the resources involved in the creation and maintenance of 32 different charging systems.
- It will cut down on local authority bureaucracy.
- It will create a sense of fairness for people who receive social care services that they are not disadvantaged just because of where they should live.
- It will end the financial discrimination of disabled people, meaning that they are less likely to live in poverty

Disadvantages

- The loss of charging income may mean local authorities cut back on social care spending to compensate. Therefore new legislation will need to come with resources to replace lost income. However, savings will be made through ending the bureaucratic and costly systems used to collect charges
- None that I can think of

4. Should all social care related services be free at the point of delivery and if not which ones should be excluded and why? (Please refer to the services set out on page 7)

There are different views on this one and you should choose the ones the answers that you favour.

Answer 1 - All Care Services should be free

Access to all Social care services is through an assessment of need and an eligibility criteria which assesses the risk of the current position. The decision on which services should be provided are based on a decision about what will help a person maintain themselves in the community. Having any charge on one of a range of services risks a person opting out of that aspect of support and then undermining the whole care package.

Answer 2 –Meals Services could be charged for.

Meals are something that everyone needs. Everyone has some degree of income available anyway to buy meals. Therefore a charge for the Meals Service is simply a replacement for what a person would ordinarily spend. If there was no charge for these meals then a client could be financially better off as a result of getting social care services. As a result a fair charge would be acceptable.

Many people may choose to access Meals Services without a social work assessment or just to use local restaurants to supply meals. Removing care charges from Meals Services might undermine these local businesses.

Answer 3 – Community Alarms and Call Services should be charged for.

Community Alarms and call services are currently easily accessed by many people without the need for a social work assessment. A small charge allows for the use of a local authority or a private service without financial hardship. Such services provide no care and simply serve to link the alarm holder with a nominated family member, friend or neighbour.

Ending care charges for this service may increase bureaucracy by bringing more people into contact with social workers for an assessment.

5. What are the likely financial implications (if any) of any proposed Bill to you or your organisation? What (if any) other significant financial implications are likely to arise?

- I/Disabled People will be able to meet the additional expenditure associated with my disability without waiting for permission from the local authority.
- I/Disabled People will be able to make choices about how to spend my income without the local authority interfering.
- I/Disabled People will be able to save money for the future, for holidays, for unexpected events or for anything else that might come up.

Local Authorities will

- Save significantly on the costs of administrating care charges.
- Save on long term social care support by having a better take up of low level social care services.
- Have somewhat less resources available to meet other needs depending on any compensatory intervention by the Scottish Government.

Health Boards will

- Save significantly on unplanned admissions, use of A & E departments as crisis centres and delayed discharges.

The Scottish Government will

- Have to properly fund social care services in Scotland.

6. Is any proposed Bill likely to have any substantial positive or negative implications for equality? If it is likely to have a substantial negative implication, how might this be minimised or avoided?

Positive

- People with disabilities will be able to access services that they need to live good lives in the community without having to worry about the financial consequences.
- People with disabilities will have the same ability to live in the community as people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities will be able to get a clear information that they can understand about what their social care services will cost.

Negative

- Can't think of any.

7. Are there any other comments you would wish to make that are relevant to this proposal?

Useful facts

Did you know that